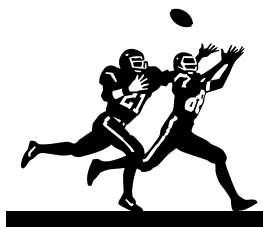


PUBLIC HEALTH NOTES



Football Head Injuries

Fall is the time for football, tailgating, team spirit and possible head injuries. Teams are training for the season, getting ready to move the ball down the field and blocking the other team from doing the same. The blocking, tackling, body hits and head butting can cause head and neck injury, including concussion.

Gone are the days of “shake it off and get back in the game.” This could be deadly! Fifty-seven percent (57%) of trauma related sports deaths among youth are caused by football head trauma. If athletes with head injuries are kept off the field, many of these deaths would be prevented, say researchers who analyzed 30 years of data.

When an athlete returns to the game following a head injury or concussion and receives another blow to the head, neck or body, there may be a greater risk for serious brain injury. Some physicians call this re-injury “second-impact syndrome.” This syndrome may be the cause of the sudden deaths on the field reported in the media.

Education of parents, coaches, trainers and students on the symptoms of concussion and the consequences of repeat head blows is critical to prevent re-injury. The athlete should not be allowed to return to the sport until cleared by a physician who is knowledgeable in head injury.

Symptoms of concussion:

- headache
- dizziness
- disorientation/confusion
- memory loss
- seizures

Any athlete who receives a head injury should be stabilized on the field, seen in the emergency room, and followed up by a sports medicine physician.